Re: Coutts Border Impacts?

From: Cody Cunningham <cody.cunningham@gov.ab.ca>
To: Kim O'Neil <kim@cmc-cvc.com>; Leah Sheffield <leah.sheffield@gov.ab.ca>
Cc: Jorge Correa <jorge@cmc-cvc.com>; Chris White <chris@cmc-cvc.com>; Marie-France Mackinnon <marie.france@cmc-cvc.com>
Date: Fri, 04 Feb 2022 12:49:11 -0700

Thank you very much for this response. I will provide it to our emergency response team as we continue to deal with this evolving situation.

Cody Cunningham
Manager, Business Development Team

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From: Kim O'Neil <kim@cmc-cvc.com>
Sent: Friday, February 4, 2022 12:26:39 PM
To: Cody Cunningham <Cody.Cunningham@gov.ab.ca>
Cc: Jorge Correa <jorge@cmc-cvc.com>; Chris White <chris@cmc-cvc.com>; Marie-France Mackinnon <marie.france@cmc-cvc.com>
Subject: RE: Coutts Border Impacts?

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Good afternoon Cody

Thank you for reaching out about the Coutts border closure impacts. Jorge forwarded your message to me.

Earlier this week our members were seeing about 150 loads affected by the Coutts border closure. It has taken some time but as I understand most have been able to move the loads to an alternate border crossing – mostly at Del Bonita. However since it took a few days to get the loads turned around there was some impact on the loads of trimmings – since they only have a 5 day shelf life. Not to mention the customer contract obligations – since most product is sold on a Just In Time basis. That led to some discounts – since there was a reduced shelf life and in some cases I understand loads would have had to be rendered.

The Del Bonita point worked for a while until the protestors started to block the highway further up from the border. However I understand that most of the loads are now clear to go through Del Bonita again or they will head over to Emerson, MB. The authorized inspection points in the western region for meat products are:

- Emerson, MB / Pembina, ND
- Coutts, AB / Sweetgrass, MT
- Aldergrove, BC / Lynden, WA

The loads that cross at Del Bonita have to work their back to Sweetgrass, Montana for the inspection by FSIS/USDA. Emerson is about a 14 hour drive and so is the Aldergrove crossing.

I spoke with the Sweetgrass inspection office and they have added extra staff to help deal with the backlog – so things seem to be working so far. They told me it is closed completely going south but the north bound lane is being allowed to move.

The sooner the Coutts border is cleared though, the better. As you will have seen the producers - CCA, Alberta Cattle Feeders and Alberta Beef Producers have issued a statement urging this to be resolved. They will ultimately suffer if the delays end up causing a slowdown at the processing plants -which will cause animals to be held back and need to stay on feed longer. It's not good for anyone.

This is becoming a perfect storm for problems! Between COVID, lack of access to shipping/port services, lack of access to containers, the A/BSE case, Floods in BC and now this! … its been a difficult year. This blockade may just be the tipping point.

If your offices can help get this cleared up the industry will be very grateful.

Thanks again for checking in.

Kim O'Neil
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From: Cody Cunningham <Cody.Cunningham@gov.ab.ca>
Sent: Friday, 4 February, 2022 12:21 PM

To: Jorge Correa <jorge@cmc-cvc.com>
Subject: Coutts Border Impacts?

Hello Jorge,
I am reaching out from Alberta Agriculture to a few of our meat processors and thought perhaps CMC is collecting what the impacts are on the sector right now due to the border issue.
Would it be possible to have a discussion or share with our Ministry on what CMC is hearing as impacts? We know some facilities have had loads returned, have slowed down production and are even considering pausing production for a day or two coming up.
Anything you can share would be appreciated or if you can direct me to the correct person at CMC.
Thank you.

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